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ART. IV. *Memoirs of my own times.* By General James Wilkinson.

———Remember that the ways of Heaven,
 Though dark, are just ; that oft some guardian power
 Attends unseen, to save the innocent !
 But if high Heaven decrees our fall—O let us
 Firmly await the stroke ; prepared alike
 To live or die. BROWN'S BARBAROSSA.

For Patriots still must fall for statesmen's safety,
 And perish by the country they preserve. SAVAGE.

Philadelphia ; Abraham Small. 3 vols. 8vo. pp. 2295.

THERE is hardly any class of books that is read with more avidity, than the memoirs of individuals, whom talents or chance, or the joint influence of both, has distinguished in society. They may be said to lead us to the hidden sources of events, to secluded fountains and rivulets, which are afterwards swallowed up in the mighty current of history, where their tributes are blended and lost in the majesty and rapidity of the stream. They place us behind the scene, and we observe how the stage effect is produced, which is so imposing at a distance. If in this way some illusions are destroyed, we are compensated by a more accurate knowledge of the machinery and the actors of the drama. Our pleasure as mere spectators may be diminished, but our capacity of judging is improved ; we learn to distinguish more accurately between falsehood and truth, and to avoid being dazzled by mere tinsel, which in the glare of false lights may pass with the vulgar for gold. The meanest of the troop, with the aid of paint, purple and gilt embroidery, may 'enact a king and make a most royal appearance ;' but Cato or Brutus or Cicero, in the plain garb of a Roman senator, will owe all their importance to the talents of the actor ; and as they are without disguise, so the more closely we examine them, the more they will rise in our estimation.

The ancients have left us but few works of this description, though what they have, are indeed masterpieces. We may form some estimate of what we have to regret on this score, by considering the value of what we possess. The abbé Bar-

thelemy, with great learning and exquisite taste, has partly supplied this defect in one of the most interesting periods of Greece, by the fictitious travels of Anacharsis ; of which design a less perfect execution had been previously attempted in the Athenian Letters. This want of individual memoirs, of private anecdote, of personal and unofficial narratives, leaves our curiosity unsatisfied, respecting many of the events and much of the social condition of antiquity. From the few anecdotes and familiar details which have reached us, we are obliged to generalize too much ; we may indeed produce a grand historical picture where the actors will be severe, energetick and dignified ; their only attendants the Lictors with the Fasces, and the whole scenery the Forum or the Capitol ; these will appear with all the decorum suited to public exposure and the observation of history ; but the painting of more graceful and smiling scenery, the garden, the villa, the saloon, the domestick and familiar groups within them ; the private intercourse, the subordinate springs, and primary combinations, which form interesting cabinet pictures, are almost wholly wanting. We may hear Demosthenes haranguing, or witness the judgments of the Areopagus ; but we cannot listen to the conversations of Socrates and Aspasia ; or observe that mother governed by a froward child, ruling her husband who governed Greece.

In modern literature these works have been abundant in proportion to their popularity. Statesmen, generals, priests, philosophers, poets, actors, artists, courtiers, magistrates, princesses, courtezans, and even tradesmen have left us their memoirs. When we choose therefore to go behind the records of history, we become intimately acquainted 'with the *characters* of divers eminent persons, the mutability of *councils*, the remarkableness of *actions*, the subtlety of *pretensions*, and the drifts of several *interests*.* We have the whole mechanism of society laid open to us, all the infirmities and all the strength of human character ; the fireside scenes, the confidential dialogues, the secret intrigues are all displayed, all the windings of the human heart, all the modifications of social relation are exposed to our reflection ; the houses are all unroofed, and without an Asmodeus for a *Cicerone*, we may examine the interiour and their inhabitants, as we do the

* Rushworth Pref. His. Col.

working of bees in a glass hive, at our leisure, and without fear of their stings.

The French have produced more works of this description than any other people. They are to be found coeval with the origin of modern literature ; and these, though much of their language is obsolete, being written before modern languages became fixed by the authority of dictionaries and academies, abound in interest from the antiquated naivete and familiarity of their style, from the absence of constraint imposed by refinement, and of palpable intention to produce *effect*, which makes so many of the works of our times theatrical, without being dramatick. This department of French literature is fruitful of variety, as well as amusement and instruction. The consummate ability, the profligate intrigues and the masterly maxims drawn from the exercise of both, by the Cardinal de Retz, in times of commotion and civil broils, furnish useful lessons to a statesman ; while the integrity, simplicity and skill of Henry the Fourth's faithful friend and minister, are noble models for emulation. We do not indeed find many such memoirs as those of de Retz, and de Sully, which afford so fine a contrast displayed by themselves, of great statesmen ; the one combining profligacy with talent, the other virtue and skill ; but every period offers us some which characterize it ; the garrulity and superstitious tales of the Duke of St. Simon give us many lively traits of the court of Louis XIV. and those which come next in order are a striking instance of how naturally the profligacy and corruption of the period of the Regency succeeded to the superstition and gloom which oppressed the brilliant court in the latter years of the old monarch. The military memoirs are numerous, for those who relish the descriptions of battles and sieges, and the increasing influence of literature is shewn by the number of accounts of themselves and their concerns by men of letters. One of the latest of these, the memoirs of Marmontel, furnishes one of the most finished and interesting specimens of the whole series ; the still more recent and voluminous collection of the Baron de Grimm, contains little of the author, but is a treasure to draw from for the history of the literature, the society, and the politics of that eventful period when the preparations were making and all the mines charging, that were to explode in the French revolution.

At a period, and in a nation where women had such extensive influence and so large a share and agency even in political events, it would be naturally expected that we should have their testimony also. They have contributed some of the most lively, graceful and instructive volumes in this class. Madame de la Fayette, the letters of Madame de Sevigné, and almost a regular series from them down to Madame Roland and the Marchioness de la Roche Jacquelein, have portrayed to us the gallantries and festivities of the court, and all the movements of society, even to the stern actions of political revolution, and the ferocious transactions of civil war. The work of the last of these ladies may be cited as a striking instance of the value of memoirs, in not only furnishing materials for history, but in giving us details with fidelity and simplicity, and in a manner more affecting and picturesque than history could adopt. There are several histories of the war of La Vendée ; but still the world had a most imperfect idea of its causes, its character and its progress, till they were presented with the admirable and deeply interesting picture by Madame de la Roche Jacquelein. The memoirs of this lady recal those of Mrs. Hutchinson, which if inferior to the former are yet not wanting in interest. When it falls to the lot of women to witness the events and narrate the horrors of civil commotions, there is a strong interest in the very contrast of their own gentleness, and the ferocious violence they describe.

There is one trait of human character exhibited in some modern memoirs, which is worthy of particular remark. This is the narration of personal failings and vices, which otherwise might have remained unknown and buried with the author. Vanity has seldom shewn itself in more perverse and reprehensible shapes, than when it has been thus occupied in giving to the world a self-exposure of disgraceful actions. The love of novelty, and paradox, the rage for distinction and the habit of false reasoning in the eloquent 'self-torturing sophist, wild Rousseau,' produced his useless and disgusting Confessions. An exposure nearly as bad of a youth mispent and almost stupidly vicious has been made by the ardent, haughty Alfieri—he relates the manner in which he wasted the first half of his life, not so much for showing how nobly he retrieved it ; but in a cold, proud, disdainful manner, as if he would shew his contempt for man-

kind, by voluntarily furnishing evidence against himself, that he might then despise even their well-founded opinion. When St. Augustin in his confessions relates the disorders and licentiousness of his early life, it is with a view to self-mortification and christian repentance. There can hardly be three more dissimilar characters, than the African Bishop, the Citizen of Geneva, and the Italian Dramatist ; but some knowledge of the human heart would be obtained in comparing different points in their lives, as given by themselves, their operation in modifying their characters, and their motives for communicating them.

The few memoirs which we have here alluded to, and which are amongst those most generally known, are all written by the persons themselves. Another class, equally numerous, is the one which gives us accounts of one individual written by another. Those of the former description are the most difficult of execution, and the most interesting in perusal. To write justly of one's self, neither with false modesty nor unreasonable presumption, demands great taste, ingenuousness and discretion. If we were called on to designate a work in each class, we should be inclined to name Boswell's Johnson as the most valuable effort of the second ; and the memoirs of Barthelemy by himself, which are prefixed to the later editions of his *Anacharsis*, as the most exquisite performance in the first. In our own country, we have no work of this kind that equals Dr. Franklin's memoirs of his own life, which is, indeed, one of the best models that any country has produced.

The period in which a man lives, who writes an account of his own times, is of great importance in securing an interest for his work. His talents may not only be greatly assisted, we had almost said dispensed with, if he is fortunate enough to exist in an era fruitful in events, which have a lasting influence on the affairs of mankind. There are frequent intervals in history, sometimes of considerable duration, when all the transactions, whether of war or peace, have a vapid tone of routine, in which there is no leading interest of any kind. In such periods we have military memoirs, giving us relations of battles that have displayed a requisite degree of military skill, and consumed a due proportion of mercenary soldiers, and left the combatants in the same situation in which they commenced, excepting a little more

burthen on their finances, and a few more wretches in their hospitals. We have also memoirs of statesmen, which tell us of speeches, and negotiations, and intrigues, where we have the common appendages of declamation, chicane and meanness; and the results produce no variation in the political standing of the parties, no gain to the great principles of civilization and humanity, no one permanent acquisition, to the cause of liberty or enlarged policy.

There are other epochs fortunate or disastrous, the very reverse of these, when some new nation makes its appearance on the stage of the world, or some ancient empire crumbles into ruins; when the energy of freedom and virtue converts a waste of stagnant marshes into fortresses impregnable to all the attacks of irritated tyranny and remorseless superstition; or shakes from a great people the chains of colonial abasement and oppression, and gives it at once a high standing among the nations of the earth; when a brutal military usurpation, the licentiousness of Pretorian guards, or the progress of the Crescent, subverts an enervated government, or quenches, in overwhelming desolation, the last glimmerings of science and the arts. If the relation of events like these abounds in animation, the study of the preparatory causes and circumstances is replete with instruction. It is not the glare of titled ostentation, or the numbers of armed legions which engage our greatest interest; it is the principles contended for and the results which ensue. The surface of Flanders is fretted with hillocks that cover the bones of the myriads, which have fallen on its plains; yet how few of those sanguinary battles, where destruction was accompanied with all 'the pomp and circumstance of war,' excites the interest which we feel for the defenders of Thermopylæ or of Bunker Hill.

If then the interest which we take in any particular period of history, is in proportion to the elevation of the principles which occupy it, the successful assertion of them, and their bearing and consequences on the affairs of mankind at large; what struggle in this jarring world can more strongly rouse every sympathy and excite more deep reflection, than that which terminated in the independence of the United States. What revolution, as it may in some respects be called, has been more the result of a long train of causes, or tended more to advance the great interests of mankind,

and notwithstanding the calamities which were produced by some of its consequences, has combined more intimately with the general progress of liberty, intelligence, and civilization? What contest has ever discovered greater firmness and energy in those who originated it, developed more noble examples of moderation and integrity in those who maintained it; and more fully justified its authors by its results, and more nobly rewarded them by the applause of the world and the happiness of their country?

It is gratifying to find that in the relations referring to this period, such a variety of anecdotes will be found for the use of history, as will throw a strong light on all its characters and events, more especially those of a military cast. We already possess the separate memoirs of many military men who were engaged in the contest, and may probably receive others.* Where we have some fears of a deficiency, is in the private history of the origin of civil transactions, of which the military events were only a consequence. The characters of the colonial governours and of the principal individuals in the different colonies, and their agency in co-operation or opposition towards the English ministry from 1750 to 1775, are very imperfectly known; yet the feelings which produced the declaration of the Fourth of July were in a process of gradual excitement and developement during this whole period. We know of but one person capable of describing this political series; on some of the points, we believe, he has committed to writing some confidential testimony; we hope that the protracted vigour of a long, laborious, and honourable life, may induce him to preserve some details, which else must perish.

It is time to say something of the work before us. The generality of readers will have a less arduous task than they would at first imagine, from the imposing size of these volumes, since but few persons will be disposed to go through the two last. The first volume contains an account of the author's origin and outset in life, his joining the army at Cambridge in 1775—of the military events in which he was concerned, to the year 1778—the part taken by him while commanding the army in Louisiana from 1797 to 1812—a critical review of the affair at Bladensburg—a his-

* Generals Moultrie, Heath, and Lee in our service—General Tarleton in the English, and some others.

tory of the engagements in Canada by the army commanded by general Brown—his own movements while commanding a division of the army on our frontier—and at the close, an account of the affair of Bunker Hill and some other transactions of the revolutionary war. The second volume is exclusively occupied with the court martial by which he was tried in 1811, and the documents appertaining to it. The third volume is in like manner entirely devoted to a court martial, held for the same purpose in 1815, with an appendix of documents. These two volumes contain many documents and much information, which will be valuable to the historian; this is more particularly true of the second volume, as it takes up the period from 1789 to 1809, and includes many minute details of various important occurrences in the affairs of Louisiana. The third volume will interest many who had directly or indirectly a personal share in the campaign, which is the subject of it. General readers will, however, confine themselves to the first volume.

General Wilkinson does not mention the year of his birth, but from other dates it was about the year 1757, in Maryland, near the village of Benedict on the Patuxent. He was educated at home, and very early commenced the study of medicine under an uncle, who had been a surgeon in the army commanded by general Wolfe, and to his uncle's description of the actions in Canada, he attributes his early predilection for a military life. In 1773, being then seventeen, he was sent by his mother, his father having died some years before, to the medical school of Philadelphia; the day after his arrival he visited the barracks, then occupied by a part of the 18th regiment, and witnessing the parade of the men, he was fascinated with the perfection of their evolutions, and his previous disposition towards a military life was strengthened. He alludes to his having fought a duel while pursuing his studies at Philadelphia; on account of some sarcasms from his companions, occasioned by his preferring the society of virtuous women to that of the contrary description. In 1775 he returned home to practise his profession, but the bursting troubles of the period that occupied every mind, wrought strongly upon the author's enthusiasm. He became one of an independent company in Georgetown, commanded by a quaker from Rhode Island. After the battle of Bunker Hill, being no longer able to restrain his inclination, he

abandoned his profession, and repaired to the camp at Cambridge as a volunteer. In march 1776 general Washington gave him a captain's commission in colonel Read's New Hampshire regiment, being at the time attached to general Green's staff, which regiment he joined at New York the next month. He speaks with regret of a circumstance which occurred on taking command of his company; the lieutenant, who was a veteran, but not promoted for want of sufficient education, had expected to obtain the command of the company. On the parade the first order given by the young captain was not obeyed, and the lieutenant stepping up asked him whither he intended to march the men. He immediately put him in arrest for mutiny, and after some explanations told the men if his next order was not obeyed, he should begin with the nearest man, run him through the body, and proceed thus with the whole company if necessary. He had no further trouble. His regiment was ordered to join the northern army, in which he served in New York and Canada under Arnold. In July 1776 he was appointed a brigade major, and in December he was sent by general Gates to general Washington with despatches; he joined the latter on the banks of the Delaware, and assisted in the memorable affairs at Trenton and Princeton. In January 1777, general Washington appointed him a lieutenant colonel, with authority to name the officers in three of the companies; on general Gates' being appointed to the command of the northern army he resigned his commission of lieutenant colonel in the line, to occupy his former station of inferior rank in the staff. This extraordinary step excited many remarks at the time; he says he was prompted to it by his zeal for the publick service, thinking he could do more good in that quarter from his local knowledge. When general Gates was to be superseded by General Schuyler, he appointed, by a general order, colonel Wilkinson, adjutant general of the army. When general Gates again resumed the command, he appears to have relied much on his adjutant's opinion, and to have followed his advice in some important occurrences. On the surrender of Burgoyne, he was sent to Congress with the official despatches announcing that important event,* and there-

* While carrying these despatches, which were of such paramount interest, he made a halt at Reading, and Congress received the news first from

upon received the brevet of brigadier general. He returned to general Gates, and while with the army received an appointment of Secretary of the Board of War, of which general Gates was president. The discovery of some intrigues of Gates respecting a letter of general Conway, abusing general Washington, and in which Wilkinson was implicated by the conduct of the former, produced an open rupture between him and Gates, and his resignation of his place of secretary of the Board of War, because he would not serve with Gates after his disgraceful conduct. He resigned his brevet of brigadier general, and in July 1779 was appointed clothier general to the army, and here he closes his account of his career at that period.

After the peace in 1783, the general went to reside in Kentucky with his family, and engaged in some mercantile transactions, particularly in a contract for tobacco with the Spanish governor of Louisiana. Disgusted with trade, he entered again into the army, was employed in various points on our extensive frontiers, had an interview with general Hamilton when he was appointed to the army in 1798, and presented to him a general view of our military posts on the frontiers. He returned to his command on the Mississippi when peace was restored with France, received Louisiana from the French, as joint commissioner with governor Claiborne; remained in command in that country till his court martial in 1811; when, after being honourably acquitted, he returned thither, and when the late war came on, he was occupied in making defensive preparations to secure New Orleans. In 1813 he was ordered to join the army on the frontiers of Canada. His operations while in that command were not successful, accusations were made against him, he was tried by a general court martial in 1815, and honourably acquitted. On the new organization of the army after the peace, he was not included in the list of the officers retained in the establishment. This is a cursory sketch of general Wilkinson's career, as he has given an account of it in these volumes. His memoirs of his life in

common report. He says, in speaking of this journey, that he was so debilitated by sickness as to be unable to travel with greater rapidity. The circumstance of his delay gave occasion to a bon mot by Samuel Adams, or as some say Dr. Witherspoon, when it was a question of voting him a sword or some other reward, he observed, that *it would be proper to give him a hair of spurs.*

the first volume terminate in the year 1778 ; of the next ten years we know nothing, and the events of the latter years we have gleaned from the accounts of the courts martial. He proposes to continue the memoirs of his life, and furnish additional anecdotes of the revolutionary war, which we hope he will perform.

Sir Walter Raleigh, in the preface to his history, gives a quaint piece of advice to the reader, 'that he should not follow truth at the heels too closely, lest it strike out his teeth,' which some of the readers of these memoirs would do well to consider. The author apologises for the imperfection of his book, by alleging the haste in which it was written, and his having no pretensions to fine writing. He has, however, given sufficient proofs of his ability to write well, and to produce a valuable work, if he would arrange his thoughts with more care, trace his plan more methodically, and above all divest himself of passion and allay his resentments. These break out continually, and sometimes so unexpectedly as to be ludicrous. The principal object of his anger is Mr. Madison ;—Mr. John Randolph, Dr. Eustis, generals Armstrong, Hampton, Brown, Scott and others come in for a share.

General Wilkinson, 'in the winter of his discontent,' sees all the sources of abuse, which are obvious to the veriest demagogue of the day ; standing armies and navies, expensive fortifications, congressional salaries, monied aristocracy, &c. &c.—and he talks against them 'in good set terms.' Yet it is principally the danger of military power, of an *enormous* standing army, of near 10,000 men, which is utterly to subvert our constitution ; the occupation of his whole life has led him to appreciate the danger on this score justly—we think his conduct in this respect not very becoming ; when a man has had a strong love of a profession and served in it forty years, even if he is obliged to abandon it unjustly, he owes it to himself to speak of it with respect ; and least of all can general Wilkinson, after the experience of his whole life, be ignorant of the necessity of a small army, to serve in case of need, as the foundation for a larger one ; and how barely our present force suffices for the preservation of the fortifications on our immense frontiers, and how utterly absurd it is to talk of danger to our institutions from such a force, so distributed.

With this belief in the necessity of a small standing army, we yield to none in our abhorrence of military tyranny, or jealous watchfulness of any attempt at military interference in our civil concerns. Important as our small military establishment is, to the preservation of the means of defence, yet it would be swept out of existence by the first expression of popular feeling. The administration should therefore observe every transaction with solicitude, that implicates the conduct of a military officer ; and where any one is guilty of folly or indiscretion towards the publick, some token of disapprobation from the proper department should follow his offence.

In noticing a man's memoirs of his own life, we are almost necessarily called upon to say something of his character. Of general Wilkinson we know nothing but from this book, and after reading it, we should be inclined to say, that many of his faults and misfortunes have been owing to his having attained promotion too early, and too rapidly, (for he rose in two years, and before he was of age,) to the brevet rank of brigadier general. The same dispositions, which in a slower and steadier course, would have been disciplined and properly matured, were injured, by his being prematurely invested with high authority. This may have induced presumption, haughtiness, and a want of that just bearing, which conciliates those around us, while it maintains true dignity. We suspect too that he has sometimes forgotten, that 'there is also a certain hypocrisy in business, whether civil or military, which they will do well to observe, who, not satisfied with discharging their duty, desire also the good report of men ;'* and though we do not reproach him very strongly for wanting this, which is the sole support of so many sorry minds, yet there must be prodigious merit to be able to do without it.— He possesses respectable talents, considerable science, and long experience in military affairs, gallantry of spirit, frankness, a superiority to mercenary views ; and having promptly engaged in the service of his country when it was a hazardous one, after having a considerable share in some important events, and been more than thirty years enrolled in its service, it seems a hard case that he should be turned adrift in the world. This, however, is the lot to which every man, who

* Preface to memoirs of captain Carleton.

serves his country, is exposed, and when he engages in the publick service, he should make up his mind to it ; he must have a spirit of high disinterestedness ; he must act for his contemporaries, and look for his reward to posterity ; and the very consciousness of acting on such high grounds is itself the noblest remuneration.

On looking over the amount of extracts we had noted, we are compelled by want of room to omit two letters from president Adams and general Hamilton in the second volume ; and this we regret not only on account of the testimony they bear to general Wilkinson's character, but for the sake of the open, honourable and statesmanlike principles they contain. These may be found at p. 154 in the 2d vol. and were produced at his court martial in 1811. On this occasion his whole conduct, publick and private, for twenty years, was implicated, and the treatment he received, might be considered in many respects as persecution. These letters answer for his character, at least up to the period at which they were written.

After Sir Guy Carlton's return to Canada at the approach of winter in 1776, general Gates dismissed the militia and concentrated his remaining force at Albany—general Washington, after his retreat from New-York, had sent him orders to join him. On his march Gates, being without information of general Washington's situation, became excessively anxious, and Wilkinson volunteered to be the bearer of a letter, and gain information. In his way through the Jerseys, he came almost by accident upon general Lee, and was present at the moment of his capture. The narration of this scene is lively, the contrast between the cynical soldier Lee, and the Connecticut *light horse* in full bottomed wigs, is highly characteristic of the hastily collected and various medley, that formed our force in the commencement of the struggle. Lee's capture was a vexatious but doubtless a fortunate event, as intrigues were carrying on to make him commander in chief.

‘I was presented to the general as he lay in bed, and delivered into his hands the letter of general Gates. He examined the superscription, and observed it was addressed to general Washington, and declined opening it, until I apprised him of the contents and the motives of my visit ; he then broke the seal and read it, after which he desired me to take repose. I lay down on my blanket before a comfortable fire, amidst the officers of his suite ; for we were not in those days incumbered with beds or baggage.—

I arose at the dawn, but could not see the general, with whom I had been previously acquainted, before eight o'clock. After some inquiries respecting the conduct of the campaign on the northern frontier, he gave me a brief account of the operations of the grand army, which he condemned in strong terms. He observed, 'that our siege of Boston had led us into great errors; that the attempt to defend islands against a superiour land and naval force was madness; that Sir William Howe could have given us *check-mate* at his discretion; and that we owed our salvation to his indolence, or disinclination to terminate the war.—When I reached the army on York island,' said Lee, 'all hands were busily employed in collecting materials and erecting barracks; and I found little Mifflin exulting in the prospect of fine winter quarters at Kingsbridge. I replied to him, *winter quarters here, sir!* and the British army still in the field! Go, set fire to those you have built, and get away by the light, or Sir William Howe will find quarters for you.'

'This advice of Lee was generally understood; it obtained for him merited applause, and general Washington gave him due credit for it. He had also been opposed to the occupancy of fort Washington, and the fall of that place enhanced his military reputation, while unavoidable misfortunes, and the unfortunate issue of the campaign, originating in causes beyond the control of the commander in chief, had quickened the discontents generated at Cambridge, and raised a party against him in Congress; and it was confidently asserted at the time, but is not worthy of credit, that a motion had been made in that body, tending to supersede him in the command of the army. In this temper of the times, if general Lee had anticipated general Washington, in cutting the cordon of the enemy between New York and the Delaware, the commander in chief would probably have been superseded, and the man, who lived the darling of his country, and died the admiration of the world, might have been consigned to retirement or oblivion. In this case Lee would have succeeded him, whose manifold infirmities would have been obscured by that honest but blind enthusiasm of the public, which never stoops to compare causes and effects, much less to analyse motives and measures.

'General Lee wasted the morning in altercation with certain militia corps who were of his command, particularly the Connecticut light horse,* several of whom appeared in large full-bottomed perukes, and were treated very irreverently; the call of the adjutant general for orders, also occupied some of his time, and we did

* 'One wanted forage, another his horse shod, another his pay, a fourth provisions, &c.—to which the general replied, 'Your wants are numerous; but you have not mentioned the last—you want to go home, and shall be indulged, for damn you, you do no good here.''

not sit down to breakfast before 10 o'clock. General Lee was engaged in answering general Gates's letter, and I had risen from the table, and was looking out of an end window, down a lane about one hundred yards in length, which led to the house from the main road, when I discovered a party of British dragoons turn a corner of the avenue at a full charge. Startled at this unexpected spectacle, I exclaimed, 'here, sir, are the British cavalry.' 'Where?' replied the general, who had signed his letter in the instant.' 'Around the house;' for they had opened files, and encompassed the building. General Lee appeared alarmed, yet collected, and his second observation marked his self-possession: 'Where is the guard?—damn the guard, why don't they fire?' and after a momentary pause, he turned to me and said, 'do, sir, see what has become of the guard.' The women of the house at this moment entered the room, and proposed to him to conceal himself in a bed, which he rejected with evident disgust. I caught up my pistols which lay on the table, thrust the letter he had been writing into my pocket, and passed into a room at the opposite end of the house, where I had seen the guard in the morning. Here I discovered their arms; but the men were absent. I stepped out of the door, and perceived the dragoons chasing them in different directions, and receiving a very uncivil salutation, I returned into the house.

'Too inexperienced immediately to penetrate the motives of this enterprize, I considered the *rencontre* accidental, and from the terrific tales spread over the country, of the violence and barbarity of the enemy, I believed it to be a wanton murdering party, and determined not to die without company. I accordingly sought a position where I could not be approached by more than one person at a time, and with a pistol in each hand I waited the expected search, resolved to shoot the first and the second person who might appear, and then to appeal to my sword. I did not remain long in this unpleasant situation, but was apprised of the object of the incursion by the very audible declaration, '*if the general does not surrender in five minutes, I will set fire to the house;*' which after a short pause was repeated with a solemn oath; and within two minutes I heard it proclaimed, '*here is the general, he has surrendered.*' A general shout ensued, the trumpet sounded the assembly, and the unfortunate Lee, mounted on my horse, which stood ready at the door, was hurried off in triumph, bareheaded, in his slippers and blanket coat, his collar open, and his shirt very much soiled from several days' use.

'General Lee merited severe punishment for his neglect of duty and disobedience of orders, and he received it from an unexpected hand. His offence was well understood by the army, and his misfortune was unpitied by those who reflected on the cause of it. It is a fact, he had very strong reasons for his neglect of general

Washington's reiterated commands ; but although they were not such as to justify the violation of a fundamental military principle, yet I verily believe his motives were patriotic, though intimately connected with a sinister ambition ; for I am persuaded that in the moment of his capture, he meditated a stroke against the enemy, which, in its consequences, would have depressed general Washington, elevated himself, and *immediately* served the cause of the United States. This opinion is supported by the following letter to general Gates.

' Basking Ridge, Dec. 13th, 1776.

' My dear Gates,

' The ingenious manœuvre of fort Washington has unhinged the goodly fabric we had been building. There never was so damned a stroke. Entre nous, a certain great man is most damnably deficient. He has thrown me into a situation, where I have my choice of difficulties ; if I stay in this province, I risk myself and army ; and if I do not stay, the province is lost forever. I have neither guides, cavalry, medicines, money, shoes or stockings. I must act with the greatest circumspection. Tories are in my front, rear, and on my flanks ; the mass of the people is strangely contaminated ; in short, unless something, which I do not expect, turns up, we are lost ; our counsels have been weak to the last degree. As to what relates to yourself, if you think you can be in time to aid the general, I would have you by all means go ; you will at least save your army. It is said that the whigs are determined to set fire to Philadelphia ; if they strike this decisive stroke, the day will be our own ; but unless it is done, all chance of liberty in any part of the globe is forever vanished. Adieu, my dear friend ! God bless you.

' CHARLES LEE.'

' Education and experience instructed general Lee that Sir William Howe, by pushing his front towards Philadelphia, must weaken his communication with his magazines at Brunswick, and expose his cordon of posts to be cut ; and he knew that the dissolution of a link in the chain would compel Sir William Howe to fall back and abandon a great portion of the conquests of the campaign ; he knew also, that the shew of military force in the Jerseys was necessary to hold the enemy in check, and keep alive the spirit of resistance in that state ; and that to hang on the flanks and rear of a victorious army, is the most effectual plan to impede its progress. Under these impressions, it would seem that general Lee had made the determination to violate his orders, to trust to his fortune, and to hazard his fame on the issue of some bold enterprize ; for we find him whiling away his time between the Hudson and the Delaware, by indolent marches and unnecessary halts, keeping always the route to general Washington's head quarters, but at the same time, watching the movements of

Sir William Howe, and waiting the period of his going into winter quarters. I have strong cause for belief, that the decisive moment had arrived, and that if Lee had not been made prisoner, he would have attacked the British post at Princeton the next morning, where the superiority of his force would have insured him success.

‘So soon as lieutenant-colonel Harcourt retreated with his prize, I repaired to the stable, mounted the first horse I could find, and rode full speed to general Sullivan, whom I found under march towards Pluckamin. I had not examined general Lee’s letter, but believing a knowledge of the contents might be useful to general Sullivan, who succeeded him in command, I handed it to him, who, after the perusal, returned it with his thanks, and advised me to rejoin general Gates without delay, which I did the next morning at Sussex court-house, whither he had led the troops from Van Kempt’s.

‘Lee’s misfortune afflicted Gates profoundly ; they had been long acquainted, had served together in the British army, and were personally attached ; their politics and political connexions were in unison, and their sympathies and antipathies ran in the same current ; yet long after and in misfortune they became estranged.* p. 102—111.

We give the following extract from his account of the battle of Trenton, one of the most important events of the war, not from the numbers engaged, but from its consequences. A circumstance which the author mentions without much emphasis, conveys in one line a lively idea of the sufferings of our soldiers ; he says, that he traced the route of the troops over the snow, ‘*which was tinged here and there with blood from the feet of the men who wore broken shoes.*’ Another circumstance is worthy of remark ; the present President of the United States, then a lieutenant, was in this action wounded in the shoulder. This fact had been so little talked about, that it was recently disputed in the newspapers. Now in these days of self-puffing, if this fortunate event had fallen on some shoulders, no man in the country would have been ignorant of it.

* ‘General Lee, in answer to his old aid-de-camp, Edwards, on this subject, observed, ‘The lady, who is a closer calculator than her husband, believed it would be more profitable to worship the rising sun, than stick to a fallen friend ; she therefore determined to pay her court by turning me out of doors. I do not blame Gates, because he has fallen under a most damnable *gynæcoeracy*, and cannot help himself.’ I read the letter, and quote from memory.’

‘Boats were in readiness, and the troops began to cross about sunset, but the force of the current, the sharpness of the frost, the darkness of the night, the ice which made during the operation, and a high wind, rendered the passage of the river extremely difficult; and but for the stentorian lungs and extraordinary exertions of colonel Knox, it could not have been effected in season to favour the enterprize; indeed we were too late to have succeeded against an enemy less negligent and less secure, for it was 4 o’clock before the troops were formed and put in motion, at which time it began to hail and snow.

‘The disposition of attack was made for two columns; the left led by the commander in chief, who was accompanied by generals Lord Sterling, Greene, Mercer, and Stevens, to make a circuit by the Pennington road and assault by King’s, now Greene street; the right, under major-general Sullivan, which included the brigade of St. Clair, to keep the river road by General Dickenson’s house, and enter the town by Water street. To give time for general Washington to effect his ‘*detour*,’ that the attack might be simultaneous, general Sullivan was ordered to halt for a few minutes at the cross road, which leads to Howell’s ferry, where he arrived about twilight. Soon after the halt, it was discovered by captain John Glover of the Marblehead regiment, that the best secured arms of the officers were wet, and not in firing condition. The communication was made to general Sullivan in presence of general St. Clair and the officers of their suites. Sullivan cast a look at St. Clair, and observed, ‘What is to be done?’ who instantly replied, ‘You have nothing for it but to push on and charge.’ We soon marched, colonel Stark in command of the advanced guard, the troops with orders to clear their muskets as they moved on in the best manner in their power, which occasioned a good deal of squibbing; in the mean time an officer was despatched to apprise the general of the state of our arms, who returned for answer by his aid-de-camp, colonel Samuel Webb, that we must ‘advance and charge.’ It was now broad day, and the storm beat violently in our faces; the attack had commenced on the left, and was immediately answered by colonel Stark in our front, who forced the enemy’s picket, and pressed it into the town, our column being close at his heels. The enemy made a momentary shew of resistance by a wild and undirected fire from the windows of their quarters, which they abandoned as we advanced, and made an attempt to form in the main street, which might have succeeded but for a six gun battery opened by captain T. Forest, under the immediate orders of general Washington, at the head of King’s street, which annoyed the enemy in various directions; and the decision of captain William Washington, who, seconded by lieutenant James Monroe, led the advanced guard of the left column, perceiving that

the enemy were endeavouring to form a battery, rushed forward, drove the artillerists from their guns, and took two pieces in the act of firing. These officers were both wounded in this charge; the captain in his wrist, the lieutenant through the fleshy part of his shoulder. These particular acts of gallantry have never been noticed, and yet they could not have been too highly appreciated, for if the enemy had got his artillery into operation in a narrow street, it might have checked our movement, and given him time to form and reflect; and if he had retired across the bridge in his rear and taken post, he would have placed a defile between us, which in our half naked, half frozen condition, he ought to have defended against our utmost efforts, and we in turn might have been compelled to retreat, which would have been fatal to us; but while I render justice to the services of Forest, Washington and Monroe, I must not withhold due praise from the dauntless Stark, who dealt death wherever he found resistance, and broke down all opposition before him.' p. 128—130.

The narrative of the subsequent events is highly interesting, but we have only room to extract some notice of general Mercer, who was killed in the skirmish at Princeton. This took place in a clear, frosty morning, and the rapidity of the pursuit was so exhilarating, and general Washington was so excited, that he cried out, '*It is a fine fox chase, my boys!*' In this affair Mr. John Donaldson, of the Philadelphia volunteer cavalry, made twenty prisoners; as he was liable to be shot when in advance by any straggler, he took up behind him a lieutenant Simpson, who if any resistance was offered, dismounted and shot the fugitive, and three men were knocked down in this way while taking aim at Mr. Donaldson. The American loss was very small in number, not exceeding thirty, but nearly half of these were officers, and some of great merit. General Mercer, having his horse wounded, was obliged to surrender and asked for quarter, but he was knocked down and received thirteen wounds with a bayonet; when feigning to be dead, one of his murderers exclaimed, '*damn him, he is dead, let us leave him!*' He was taken up and languished a few days. The anecdotes of him shew the temper of the times, in the display of his motives, for engaging in the cause, and in his objection to the promotion of an officer who deserved it. So wholly devoted were many pure minds to the publick cause at that time, that any private advancement, or any thing which looked like personal ambition, seemed to them unworthy of an Ame-

rican soldier. General Wilkinson's account of Mercer's escape after Braddock's defeat, is contained in a note, and is an accumulation of horror; the fancy of the poet or the artist could not go beyond it. An officer, escaping from a murderous defeat, wounded, alone, traversing a wilderness of an hundred miles, infested by lurking savages with a dead rattlesnake hanging on his shoulder for his sustenance, is beyond any of the conceptions of *Salvator Rosa*.

‘On the night of the first of January, general Mercer, colonel C. Biddle, and doctor Cochran, spent the evening with general St. Clair. Fatigued with the duties of the day, I had lain down in the same apartment, and my attention was attracted by the turn of their conversation, on the recent promotion of captain William Washington, from a regiment of infantry to a majority of cavalry. Gen. Mercer expressed his disapprobation of the measure; at which the gentlemen appeared surprised, as it was the reward of acknowledged gallantry; and Mercer, in explanation, observed; ‘We are not engaged in a war of ambition; if it had been so, I should never have accepted a commission under a man who had not seen a day’s service (alluding to the great orator, and distinguished patriot, Patrick Henry;) we serve not for ourselves, but for our country, and every man should be content to fill the place in which he can be most useful. I know Washington to be a good captain of infantry, but I know not what sort of a major of horse he may make; and I have seen good captains make indifferent majors; for my own part, my views in this contest are confined to a single object, that is, the success of the cause, and God can witness how cheerfully I would lay down my life to secure it.’ The compact was sealed, and within thirty-six hours he received his mortal wounds from the bayonets of the enemy.

‘General Mercer, a Scotchman by birth, was a physician by profession. and I have heard the following interesting incident of his life. He served in the campaign of 1755, with general Braddock, and was wounded through the shoulder in the unfortunate action near Fort du Quesne; unable to retreat, he lay down under cover of a large fallen tree, and in the pursuit, an Indian leaped upon his covert immediately over him, and after looking about a few seconds for the direction of the fugitives, he sprung off without observing the wounded man who lay at his feet. So soon as the Indians had killed the wounded, scalped the dead, rifled the baggage, and cleared the field, the unfortunate Mercer, finding himself exceedingly faint and thirsty, from loss of blood, crawled to an adjacent brook, and after drinking plentifully, found himself so much refreshed, that he was able to walk, and commenced

his return by the road the army had advanced ; but being without subsistence, and more than an hundred miles from any christian settlement, he expected to die of famine, when he observed a rattlesnake on his path, which he killed and contrived to skin, and throwing it over his sound shoulder, he subsisted on it as the claims of nature urged until he reached fort Cumberland on the Potowmack.' p. 146, 147.

While the American and British armies were on the North river in 1777, one of the most important actions that took place, previous to the final surrender of the latter, was the battle of the 7th of October—respecting which some interesting anecdotes are given.

‘ Having satisfied myself, after fifteen minutes’ attentive observation, that no attack was meditated, I returned and reported to the general, who asked me what appeared to be the intentions of the enemy. ‘ They are foraging, and endeavouring to reconnoitre your left ; and I think, sir, they offer you battle.’ ‘ What is the nature of the ground, and what your opinion ? ‘ Their front is open, and their flanks rest on woods, under cover of which they may be attacked ; their right is skirted by a lofty height. I would indulge them.’ ‘ Well, then, order on Morgan to begin the game.’ I waited on the colonel, whose corps was formed in front of our centre, and delivered the order ; he knew the ground, and inquired the position of the enemy ; they were formed across a newly cultivated field, their grenadiers with several field pieces on the left, bordering on a wood and a small ravine formed by the rivulet before alluded to ; their light infantry on the right, covered by a worm fence at the foot of the hill before mentioned, thickly covered with wood ; their centre composed of British and German battalions. Colonel Morgan, with his usual sagacity, proposed to make a circuit with his corps by our left, and under cover of the wood to gain the height on the right of the enemy, and from thence commence his attack, so soon as our fire should be opened against their left ; the plan was the best which could be devised, and no doubt contributed essentially to the prompt and decisive victory we gained.

‘ This proposition was approved by the general, and it was concerted that time should be allowed the colonel to make the proposed circuit, and gain his station on the enemy’s right before the attack should be made on their left ; Poor’s brigade was ordered for this service, and the attack was commenced in due season on the flank and front of the British grenadiers, by the New Hampshire and New York troops. True to his purpose, Morgan at this critical moment poured down like a torrent from

the hill, and attacked the right of the enemy in front and flank. Dearborn at the moment, when the enemy's light infantry were attempting to change front, pressed forward with ardour and delivered a close fire; then leapt the fence, shouted, charged, and gallantly forced them to retire in disorder; yet headed by that intrepid soldier, the earl of Balcarras, they were immediately rallied and re-formed behind a fence in rear of their first position; but being now attacked with great audacity in front and flanks by superior numbers, resistance became vain, and the whole line, commanded by Burgoyne in person, gave way and made a precipitate and disorderly retreat to his camp, leaving two twelve and six six pounders on the field with the loss of more than 400 officers and men killed, wounded and captured, and among them the flower of his officers, viz. brigadier-general Frazer, major Ackland commanding the grenadiers, Sir Francis Clark, his first aid-de-camp, major Williams commanding officer of the artillery, captain Money deputy quarter-master general, and many others. After delivering the order to general Poor and directing him to the point of attack, I was peremptorily commanded to repair to the rear and order up Ten Broeck's brigade of York militia 3000 strong; I performed this service, and regained the field of battle at the moment the enemy had turned their backs, fifty-two minutes after the first shot was fired. I pursued the hard pressed flying enemy, passing over killed and wounded until I heard one exclaim, 'protect me, sir, against this boy.' Turning my eyes, it was my fortune to arrest the purpose of a lad, thirteen or fourteen years old, in the act of taking aim at a wounded officer who lay in the angle of a worm fence. Inquiring his rank, he answered, 'I had the honour to command the grenadiers;' of course, I knew him to be major Ackland, who had been brought from the field to this place, on the back of a captain Shrimpton of his own corps, under a heavy fire, and was here deposited, to save the lives of both. I dismounted, took him by the hand and expressed hopes that he was not badly wounded; 'not badly,' replied this gallant officer and accomplished gentleman, 'but very inconveniently, I am shot through both legs; will you sir have the goodness to have me conveyed to your camp?' I directed my servant to alight, and we lifted Ackland into his seat, and ordered him to be conducted to head-quarters. I then proceeded to the scene of renewed action, which embraced Burgoyne's right flank defence, and extending to his left, crossed a hollow covered with wood, about 40 rods to the entrenchment of the light infantry; the roar of cannon and small arms at this juncture was sublime, between the enemy, behind their works, and our troops entirely exposed, or partially sheltered by trees, stumps, or hollows, at various distances not exceeding 120 yards. This right flank defence of

the enemy, occupied by the German corps of Breyman, consisted of a breast-work of rails piled horizontally between perpendicular pickets, driven into the earth, formed *en potence* to the rest of his line, and extended about 250 yards across an open field, and was covered on the right by a battery of two guns. The interval from the left to the British light infantry was committed to the defence of the provincialists, who occupied a couple of log cabins. The Germans were encamped immediately behind the rail breast-work, and the ground in front of it declined in a very gentle slope for about 120 yards, when it sunk abruptly; our troops had formed a line under this declivity, and covered breast high were warmly engaged with the Germans. From this position, about sunset, I perceived brigadier-general Learned advancing towards the enemy with his brigade, in open column, I think with colonel M. Jackson's regiment in front, as I saw lieutenant-colonel Brooks, who commanded it, near the general when I rode up to him; on saluting this brave old soldier, he inquired, 'where can I *put in* with most advantage.' I had particularly examined the ground between the left of the Germans and the light infantry, occupied by the provincialists, from whence I had observed a slack fire: I therefore recommended to general Learned to incline to his right, and attack at that point; he did so with great gallantry; the provincialists abandoned their position and fled; the German flank was by this means uncovered; they were assaulted vigorously, overturned in five minutes, and retreated in disorder, leaving their gallant commander, lieutenant-colonel Breyman, dead on the field. By dislodging this corps, the whole British encampment was laid open to us; but the extreme darkness of the night, the fatigue of the men, and the disorder incident to undisciplined troops after so desultory an action, put it out of our power to improve the advantage; and in the course of the night General Burgoyne broke up his camp and retired to his original position, which he had fortified behind the great ravine.'

p. 267—272.

Major Ackland, who was wounded and taken prisoner, was accompanied by his wife, whose strong conjugal affection gained her some celebrity. When her husband fell into our hands, she came with a flag and a letter from general Burgoyne to take care of him. Her reception at the American posts was misrepresented and made a subject of calumny against our army. Major (now general) Dearborn was the officer commanding, and general Wilkinson relates all the circumstances of her reception. He has given two long extracts and very interesting ones, from a journal published by

the baroness Reidesel, at Berlin, in 1800. She accompanied her husband, who was a general officer in Burgoyne's army ; and lady Harriet Ackland, who might be called a fellow sufferer, is of course mentioned in it. She relates some anecdotes of general Schuyler, which mark his noble, generous character. It is always a subject of regret that this officer should have been deprived of the command of the army, and of the glory of capturing Burgoyne, to have both devolve upon Gates who was every way his inferiour. The following extract gives some further account of major Ackland, and we have marked it, because generous sentiments displayed between men engaged against each other in conflict, is an exhibition of the most elevated feelings.

Before we leave this part of these memoirs, we should willingly make some extracts relating to the convention of Saratoga, where it appears general Wilkinson rendered very essential service at a critical moment, but our limits will not permit. We have also omitted all mention of the serious difficulties in which the author was involved on account of general Conway's letter to Gates, reflecting on general Washington. Gates was a weak man, and Conway was what Washington styled him, 'a dangerous incendiary.' The reader will find the narrative of the whole campaign, which terminated in the surrender of general Burgoyne, replete with interest.

'A few days after my return to Albany, major Ackland with whose family I was on an intimate footing, spoke to me with some solicitude on the subject of the retaliation threatened by Congress, for the ill treatment of colonel Ethan Allen ; he had made arrangements for lady Harriet's *accouchment* in that place, but became uneasy lest the threat should be carried into effect, and he be selected as the object. He asked my opinion as a friend, whether it would be most advisable to remain where he was, or to obtain leave to remove on his parole to New York. I did not hesitate to recommend the latter, because by being near the commander of his army, he might be able to accelerate his exchange, and by being out of sight, should retaliation take place, he might be overlooked. He then inquired how he could effect this purpose ; and I offered him my assistance, on condition he would make me a pledge ; he promised every thing in his power, and I advised him to propose to general Gates, that if he would parole him, he should exert his utmost influence to procure colonel Allen's exchange ; and that, in case he did not succeed, then

he would use his exertions to procure the exchange of my fellow statesman and friend, major Otho Williams, with whom I had served at Cambridge, when he was a subaltern in the rifle company of captain Price, and who was suffering severely in captivity at the time, having been wounded and made prisoner at fort Washington in 1776. Major Ackland entered into this stipulation, and gave me his honour for the performance. His application to general Gates succeeded, and he removed with his precious charge to New York. I wrote major Williams by him, and on his arrival there, finding the major was confined on Long Island, major Ackland procured permission for him to visit the city, and accompanied it with an invitation to his house, introduced him to lady Harriet, distinguished him by the most generous and friendly attentions, and finally procured his exchange, not being able to succeed in that of colonel Allen. Ackland took great interest in listening to major Williams's recital of his sufferings, and those of the American prisoners, which frequently brought tears from lady Harriet. Major Ackland's connexions, fortune, and parliamentary standing, being a member of the House of Commons, licensed him in the free expression of his sentiments; and one day on 'Change, when the treatment of the American prisoners became a topic of conversation, after expressing his abhorrence, he observed, '*But, gentlemen, inhumanity originates at head-quarters, and you all follow the fashion.*' On another occasion, after dining with lady Harriet, he proposed to major Williams a visit to an assembly; they entered, and the attention of the belles and beaux could not but be attracted by two such elegant figures as Ackland and Williams; but the rancour of civil animosity prevailed over the obligations of good breeding, and Williams was shunned like a pestilence. Ackland made his introduction general, but without effect; and after sauntering across the room several times, 'Come, Williams,' said he, 'this society is too illiberal for you and me; let us go home and sup with lady Harriet.'

'But unfortunate was the destiny of this gallant, generous, high minded gentleman; and it cannot be listened to by an American without deep regret, when it is known he gave his life in defence of their honour. I have the following detail from an English gentleman in whom I place confidence;—Ackland, after his return to England, procured a regiment, and at a dinner of military men, where the courage of the Americans was made a question, took the negative side with his usual decision; he was opposed, warmth ensued, and he gave the lie direct to a lieutenant Lloyd, fought him, and was shot through the head. Lady Harriet lost her senses, and continued deranged two years; after which, I have been informed, she married Mr. Brudenell, who

accompanied her from general Burgoyne's camp, when she sought her wounded husband on the Hudson's river.' p. 376—378.

General Wilkinson passes over the interval between 1777 and 1797. In 1799, when the army was enlarged during the troubles with France, he received a letter from general Hamilton, which we shall lay before our readers—

‘*New York, Feb. 12th, 1799.*

‘Sir,—The interesting incidents which have latterly occurred in our political situation, having rendered it expedient to enlarge the sphere of our military arrangements, it has in consequence become necessary to regulate the superintendence of our military force in its various and detached positions, in such a manner as while it will serve to disburthen the department of war, *of details incompatible with its more general and more important occupations*, will likewise conduce to uniformity and system in the different branches of the service.

‘The commander in chief having for the present declined actual command, it has been determined, in pursuance of the above views, to place the military force every where, under the superintendence of major-general Pinckney and myself. In the allotment for this purpose, my agency is extended to the garrisons on the western lakes, and to all the troops in the north western territory, including both banks of the Ohio, and upon the Mississippi; in short to all the western army, except the parts which may be in the states of Tennessee and Kentucky. Of this you will have been informed by the secretary of war.

‘From the relation which is thus constituted between us, I allow myself to anticipate great mutual satisfaction. Every disposition on my part will certainly facilitate it, and tend to promote the discharge of your trust, in the manner best adapted to your honour and the advancement of the service.

‘It was the united opinion of the commander in chief, general Pinckney, and myself, when lately convened at Philadelphia, that your speedy presence in this quarter was necessary, towards a full discussion of the affairs of the scene, in which you have so long had the direction in their various relations, and towards the formation, with the aid of your lights, of a more perfect plan for present and eventual arrangements. Much may be examined in a personal interview, which at so great a distance cannot be effected by writing. The actual and probable situation of our public affairs, in reference to foreign powers, renders this step indispensable. You will therefore be pleased, with all practicable expedition, to repair to Philadelphia; upon your arrival there giving me immediate advice of it. If this can be most conve-

niently accomplished by way of New Orleans, you are at liberty to take that route. On this point you are the best judge, and will no doubt act with circumspection.

‘ It must rest with you to dispose of the command of the troops at the different stations, during your absence, and to give the proper instructions in conformity with those which have been received from the secretary of war. On this head only one remark will be made. The confidence in your judgment has probably led to the reposing in your discretion, powers too delicate to be intrusted to an officer less tried; capable perhaps of being so used as to commit prematurely the peace of the United States. Discretions of this tendency ought not to be transferred, beyond what may be indispensable for defensive security. Care must be taken that the nation be *not embroiled*, but in consequence of a *deliberate policy in the government*.

‘ Official letters from you to me, as you have been apprised by the secretary at war, are to be forwarded through him; they must be open and under cover. The design of this is, that he may have an opportunity, in cases of great urgency, which could not conveniently wait for my direction, to interpose with the requisite measures. In your absence, it will be proper that the officer or officers you may substitute in the command, should communicate with you; also transmitting their letters open under cover to the secretary at war. *This will preserve unbroken the chain of your command.*

‘ With great consideration, &c. &c.

‘ (Signed)

‘ A. HAMILTON.

‘ *Brigadier-general Wilkinson.*’

General Wilkinson soon after arrived in New York, and had several interviews with general Hamilton.

The arrangements respecting the army proposed by him to general Hamilton, and approved by general Washington, were prevented by the restoration of peace with France. This restoration the author attributes to the agency of the worthy Dr. Logan of Pennsylvania, whose conduct he highly applauds in going voluntarily between the two countries; and says he was entitled to equal praise in 1810, for attempting a similar object, although he adds, ‘ he was abused for this interference’ by the same persons, who had applauded him on the former occasion. General Wilkinson gives us three letters, which originated in this second embassy; one is addressed to the marquis Wellesley, another to Sir John Sinclair, and his answer. This latter is a curiosity. Though

their joint efforts could not prevent the war, he sends him 'two recipes for preventing the mildew, which would be invaluable if they are found to answer.'

' *Edinburgh, July 20th, 1815.*

' My dear Sir,

' I had the pleasure of receiving yours. I rejoice exceedingly at the restoration of peace between the two countries. It was neither your fault nor mine, that a war, so unfortunate for both countries, was not prevented. I am now at Edinburgh, at a distance from all my papers, and can only request your acceptance of the trifles herewith inclosed, together with two receipts for preventing the mildew, which would be invaluable, if they are found to answer.

' Excuse a few hasty lines, and believe me with much esteem and regard,

' Yours,

' JOHN SINCLAIR.

' *Dr. George Logan.*'

In the course of his communications with general Hamilton, the author made some inquiries about his political opinions. We request the reader's attention to the manly, dignified answers to these queries.

' The splendid abilities of general Hamilton were admitted on all hands, but his political sentiments and public services, became a subject of controversy between the adverse parties, which divided the community; on one hand he was eulogised as the consummate statesman, and the sound patriot; whilst on the other, he was charged with predilections to royalty, and political attachments hostile to republican institutions; his works best bespeak his transcendant talents, and general Washington bore testimony to his probity and patriotism. The entire confidence with which this gentleman treated me, licensed the most unreserved frankness, and one day in a desultory conversation, I inquired of him whether he knew he was considered by many, as the advocate of royal governments, and the decided friend of Great Britain? He replied, that those with whom he was associated in politics, and who understood him, would acquit him of these predilections; but that those who were of the opposite party, had, he understood, accused him of both; he said, that the part he took in the federal convention, had, he supposed, given rise to the first imputation, and his opposition to the public sympathies, for revolutionary France, to the last; that in the convention, he

had laboured to promote a system of government, which he believed best calculated to preserve the integrity of the union; for, that, from his reading and experience, he could not bring himself to believe a great empire could be protected by a thatched roof, against the storms and tempest to which all states are liable; and that, therefore, he was for vesting Congress with a qualified control over the state governments; to guard against caprice and contumacy, and to secure obedience to the national will. That his adversaries were inconsistent, inasmuch as they allowed him to possess discernment and knowledge, and yet charged him with a desire to introduce a monarchy, which every person, in the least acquainted with the genius and temper of the people of the United States, must know was absurd. That under the existing constitution, he could readily conceive a possible case, which might lead to a subversion of the general government, that was a coalition between Virginia and Massachusetts, to resist the measures of Congress; for, said he, it would be difficult to find a remedy for such an evil, originating with those powerful states. With respect to the other point, he said, it was not from an unfriendly disposition to the French people, that he had opposed the public sympathies, but it was to prevent the honest zeal of our own people, from hurrying them headlong into the arms of a nation, engaged in a contest, the end of which, no one could discern; that his sole object was to preserve the independence of the United States, by saving them from political engagements, which might prove dangerous to their future peace and prosperity; and that in regard to Great Britain, although the policy he had advocated might indirectly favour her European views, it had been the effect of circumstances, in which his dispositions had no share; for that at the very time, his heart bled under the sense of the wrongs, offered by Great Britain to the United States, and he had no doubt the haughty spirit of that nation would involve us in a war with her in less than seven years; for which, it was his opinion, we should then begin to prepare; and it is a fact, that all his measures and deliberations took that direction.

p. 463—465.

We conclude our numerous extracts with one more, containing some anecdotes of general Washington, which conclude the volume.

‘ During my intercourse with general Hamilton at New York in 1799, our official engagements produced frequent references to the opinion of general Washington, and I embraced the occasion, to obtain a more distinct view of the private character of that great man, than our military relations had permitted.

‘There may be many living witnesses of the fact, that Sir Henry Clinton, whilst he commanded in New York, occupied the house of captain Kennedy, of the British navy, near the battery; and that there were no buildings at that time between it and the river. In these quarters the chief reposed in security with the ordinary guard in front, relying on naval protection for safety in his rear. General Washington had by his spies ascertained precisely the approaches, not only to Sir Henry’s quarters, but to his bed-chamber, and the enterprise appeared so feasible, that he determined to carry him off. The arrangements were made for light whale boats with muffled oars, and 150 Marblehead seamen, properly commanded; every thing being ready, the detachment waited for the approach of night; in the interval colonel Hamilton took occasion to observe to the general, that ‘there could be little doubt of the success of the enterprise, but,’ said he, ‘have you examined the consequences of it?’ The general inquired ‘in what respect?’ ‘Why,’ replied Hamilton, ‘it has occurred to me that we shall rather lose than gain by removing Sir Henry Clinton from the command of the British army, because we perfectly understand his character, and by taking him off we only make way for some other, perhaps an abler officer, whose character and dispositions we may have to learn.’ The general acknowledged these reflections had not occurred to him, but with noble frankness admitted their force, thanked colonel Hamilton for his suggestion, and the expedition was abandoned. I had heard of this incident, and making inquiry of general Hamilton relative to the fact, he gave the preceding details.

‘On other occasions, when in conversation respecting this great man, general Hamilton observed, that it was difficult to decide, whether general Washington was greater in the field or in the cabinet; he said the world had very naturally decided in favour of his military capacity, but from the sum of his observations, he considered him at least equally sound as a statesman; for whatever might have been the jealousies or the insinuations of party, it was no humiliation to him to acknowledge, that he had in council frequently differed in opinion with president Washington, and that events had generally proved that he was wrong and the President right. But he dwelt on a specific trait in general Washington’s character, which it were devoutly to be wished his successors could imitate; this was, that in ‘*all appointments to office, wherein he was especially called to exercise his own judgment, he nobly divested himself of sympathy or antipathy, and made what he considered the fitness of the agent to the office the ground of his choice*;’ as an evidence of the fact, he mentioned, that, ‘*Colonel Pickering, at the time he was appointed postmaster-general, was no favourite of president Washington.*

but that he knew the colonel to be a man of industry and method, and had confidence in his integrity; and as to myself,' said he, 'there had been for some time such a standing or misunderstanding, between us, that I had no more expectation of office than I had of being appointed Pope's nuncio, when I received the invitation to take charge of the treasury department.' That a coolness had taken place between the commander in chief and colonel Hamilton, towards the close of the war, and that the colonel had left his family, was notorious, but there were very few persons acquainted with the cause, which I shall now submit to my readers, as correctly as memory will serve me, and should I commit an error, will refer to general St Clair for correction. who is the only man living, within my knowledge, acquainted with the facts.

'The army was encamped in New Jersey at some point east of the Rariton, and perhaps at Perackness. The general was just mounting his horse, to visit his advanced post, when he recollected a letter he had recently received from the British commander, which it occurred to him he might have occasion for whilst at the lines; he called colonel Hamilton, and requested him 'to hand the letter to him.' The colonel returned to the office, but not being able to place his hand on it, reported that 'it was mislaid.' The general replied, 'I must have it.' Search was again made without effect, and colonel Hamilton returning, repeated that the letter had been mislaid, and expressed his sorrow at not being '*able to find it.*' The general rejoined with warmth, 'Sir, you shall find it.' Hamilton was astonished, but replied promptly, 'I shall find it, sir, but must let you know, that in addressing me, you do not speak to a menial.' The occasion was honourable to the parties; it was the quarrel of Sully and Henry; it furnished general Washington an occasion for the display of his magnanimity, and colonel Hamilton an opportunity to assert his personal dignity and independence of mind. Colonel Hamilton retired from head-quarters, but was appointed to the command of a battalion in the elite corps, at the head of which he stormed a redoubt during the siege of York before the surrender of Cornwallis.' p. 852—854.

Before we take leave of this work, we must express our wishes that general Wilkinson would continue it; and in doing this, that he would forget the vexations and injustice of the present times, and give us all that he can recollect of the character and events of the revolution. He was brought into close contact with some of the most distinguished men of that era. Let him in another edition strike out in the first volume all that relates to Bladensburg and Canadian

battles, and give the publick what relates to the revolutionary war ; arrange the materials more regularly and continue it down to the close. In doing this he will give the publick a very interesting and useful work.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

Poem, delivered before the ΦΒΚ society of Harvard University, on their anniversary, August 28th, 1817.

BY JOHN WARE, M. D.

[A few introductory lines, and some other passages, which were spoken, are omitted in printing.]

NOVELS on novels—shelves on shelves arise,
Of various merit, as of various size ;
But good and bad, promiscuous as they fall,
A greedy host advance, and swallow all.
Like Egypt's reptile race, they crowd their way,
Nor rank, nor age, nor place, their progress stay ;
They throng the gaudy mansions of the great ;
They greet the poor man in his humbler state ;
Nor in the proudest dome, or meanest hovel,
Can human flesh and blood resist a novel.

And see ! they mount the toilet of the fair,
And seek and find an easy homage there.
Domestick drudgery can scarce advance
Its claims in competition with romance ;
Grumbling the brother, or the husband, goes
With elbows ragged, or undarned hose ;
And thus discovers, that romantick scenes
Are not the thing for ladies in their teens.
Balls, parties—meal-times, are alike forgot ;
Poor Byron lies unread, and Walter Scott ;
Cares, duties, pleasures, without notice pass ;
And every thing neglected, but the glass.—
Some cruel mother may perhaps deny
The precious volumes to her daughter's eye ;
Then, after thousand efforts to deceive,
She gets the lovely book without her leave ;
And reads, with brush in hand, should madam come,
'That she may jump, and seem to sweep the room.